

Analysis of the Implementation of a Full-Time Teacher Mentor

Program for Initial Educators in the Sun Prairie

Area School District


by

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ABSTRACT

Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year the Sun Prairie Area School District in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin adopted a full-time mentor program as an integral component in the initial educator induction program. For the present analysis literature describing various teacher mentor and induction program models was reviewed. The specific models include: building buddies, pull-out mentors, full-time mentors and retired teachers as mentors. These models were analyzed for pros and cons in program components including: the role of the mentor, mentor selection, mentor training, mentor activities, time allocation and costs. The initial educators and mentors were surveyed to determine if the full-time mentor program was successful in its implementation year and was meeting the program goals. The data was also analyzed to determine the correlations between the mentors and the initial educators in the survey responses. Retention data was analyzed and will be analyzed again after three and six years to gauge the impact the full-time

mentor program has on increasing teacher retention for new teachers in the Sun Prairie Area School District.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The Sun Prairie Area School District is a rapidly growing K-12 school district located five miles north of Madison, the capital of Wisconsin. The current student population is 5760 students and has grown by over 700 students in the past three school years. Currently there are plans being made to build a new high school and build the seventh elementary in the next five years as needed for continued growth. As more and more class rooms are built the district is also seeing the need to increase staffing across all levels of job assignments. The classification of employees that this study will focus on is the growth in new teachers. This past year, with the opening of a new elementary school and additions on the two middle schools, along with retirements and resignations, there were over 75 new teachers hired. This brings the current teacher census to 504 teachers. As the current teaching population approaches retirement age we are anticipating needing 130 new teachers in the next five years. When compounded by new teachers needed for growth this number will at least double.

In a January 17, 2006 published article in *Teacher Magazine* quoting statistics taken from the *National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children, 2003* (Ingersoll, 2002. p.10), it was cited that 46 percent of all teachers will leave the teaching profession within five years. This number is lower than other studies have shown in the past decade. One way that school districts can reduce this significant turnover rate is to provide a quality induction program for new teachers. "The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project has shown with documented results that by providing a high quality induction program to support new teachers they were able to increase new teacher retention rates to over 88 percent after six years"

(Kersten, 2000. p. 10). It is often difficult for a school district to allocate resources to an induction program, but when you compare the costs of recruiting new teachers to the cost of induction programs the savings should justify the costs. "Using data from schools in California and Connecticut, the Washington, D.C., nonprofit Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that comprehensive induction costs approximately \$4,000 per teacher each year. On the other hand using national numbers, the group estimates that replacing a new teacher costs an average of \$12,500" (Kersten, 2000. p. 10).

The Sun Prairie Area School District started a mentor program about seven years ago. The first attempts at mentoring were a building buddy system with mentors assigned. These buddies did not participate in a formal training program and their whole introduction to mentoring was attendance at a two hour meeting. The Sun Prairie Area School District joined the Dane County New Teacher Project four years ago. The Dane County New Teacher Project was a program that was modeled after the New Teacher Project in Santa Cruz, California. At that time several administrators went through the Foundations of Mentoring training program. The school district decided to adopt a modified version of the Santa Cruz model as their training program and began to build a cadre of trained mentors. Though the district was still using a mentor model that was based on mentoring as an add-on activity, at least it was training the mentors. As the district studied the Santa Cruz model more in depth it became obvious that to really make a difference the district needed to devote more time and resources to mentoring and induction. At the same time the State of Wisconsin promulgated new rules for teacher licensure, called PI-34. In these rules there were specific obligations that a district would

have for initial educators. Included in these requirements was a trained mentor for all initial educators and ongoing support seminars.

As the district struggled with how to provide these supports it began to engage various stakeholders in in-depth conversations. The district worked with a PI-34 committee that was comprised of School Board Members, Principals, District Office Administrators and Teachers to design a new model. The model that was chosen released teachers full time from the classroom for three years. During these three years the mentor teachers would each be assigned to 15 +/- 2 initial educators to mentor. The mentor would work with these teachers for all of the three years helping them acclimate to Sun Prairie and work to develop their professional development plan. The district bargained in two additional days of training for all new teachers prior to the start of school and developed ongoing training seminars that are scattered throughout the school year. The first two mentors were hired in the spring of 2005. They spent the spring working with the Staff Development Coordinator to design an induction program. The district limited the number of initial educators that would be hired for the 2005-2006 school year to 30 initial educators and divided the case load by teaching level. The district has recently posted the next two teacher mentor positions and is recruiting for the 2006-2007 school year. The model appears to be very well received, but the district is seeking data to support this type of mentoring program.

Statement of the Problem

The district wants to evaluate the effectiveness of the new full time release mentor program and make any suggestions for improvement in future years. It is time to study what has been created and evaluate the type of impact this program has had on the initial

educators. The average cost for each new educator in Sun Prairie is over the national average of \$4,000. It is estimated in Sun Prairie the model will cost approximately \$5,000 per year for each of the first three years that a teacher is an initial educator in Sun Prairie Schools. With this investment in each initial educator the district also needs to be sure that the program is reducing the turnover of new teachers and is providing quality education to the students of the district.

The goals of the Sun Prairie Area School District New Teacher Mentor Program have four separate components. The first component is to build a collaborative environment in which teachers explore best practices. When a teacher graduates from college they have very limited classroom experience, most limited only to the student teaching that they did as part of their teacher preparatory program. For the new educator to be successful they need to see techniques that would be considered best practices in education modeled by master teachers. The induction program allows the new teachers the opportunity to watch not only their mentor lead their class through lessons, but can get release time to watch other master teachers teach in a similar subject matter or grade level. The second component is to provide a supportive, confidential environment in which teachers work together to solve problems. The mentors provide direct teaching observation for the initial educators and can provide candid feedback that is shared for the sole purpose of improving the new educator's practice. If challenges do exist the mentor will work with the initial educator to problem solve and explore a variety of solutions. The third component is to create a community of life-long, reflecting learners who continually strive to improve student achievement. Through the use of a weekly reflection log the new teacher and the mentor can dialog about what is going well, and

what goals they need to work towards. Also through the ongoing professional development opportunities the teachers can actively participate in professional growth opportunities that are designed to enhance the teaching practice of all educators, not just those new to the profession. This time for collaboration among grade level and subject matter teachers creates an ongoing dialog and a community of learners. The fourth and last goal of the program is to help the initial educators align their teaching practice to the ten Wisconsin Teaching Standards. The initial educators must complete a self assessment rubric on each of the ten teaching standards and then work with their mentor to focus in on the areas that need the most growth. Since the mentor will work with the teachers for the first three years this allows for the first year of reflection and beginning to design a professional development plan (PDP), a second year to begin to work on the standards that have been chosen for the PDP, and by the end of the third year it is the district's hope that many of the initial educators will be advanced enough to have their plan approved and can advance to become a professional educator.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study will be to determine if the program is meeting its goals. The study is also being done to attempt to justify the cost of the program to the various stakeholder groups. It will be important to determine if the initial educators are benefiting from the program and retention rates of the initial educators are increasing over time. It is also a belief that the mentors will gain valuable experiences in the program and when they return to their classroom after the three years of being a mentor they will be a better practitioner. The study will also look to what changes and modifications can be made over the next five years as the program grows.

There are many stakeholders from the school community who have a vested interest in the success of the initial educators in the Sun Prairie Area School District. It is the obligation of the district to provide high quality educators to the students and the parents of these students in the district. The students and the parents of students who may be assigned to a first year teacher deserve to have the same quality education that is occurring from the district's more experienced educators. Through professional development, modeling, and mentoring it is the district's intent to bring the new teachers up to the Sun Prairie standards at a faster rate than if they were not getting one-on-one support.

The initial educators need to feel supported by the school district. These educators need the coaching to understand how to become reflective practitioners and look for continuous improvement in their classroom environment. The initial educators need to understand the content area and teaching standards. Through conferences, observations, and ongoing training and support seminars the initial educators are supported by their mentors. The mentors also have a stake in the success of the program. The mentors are assigned a "new class" of fifteen (15) teachers for a period of three years. It is their obligation to model best teaching practices for these initial educators and support them through confidential weekly interactions. Through the use of a collaborative assessment log they can provide feedback and help the initial educators to become reflective practitioners. The mentors also should grow professionally through this three year process and be able to translate this growth back into their classroom.

The District Office Administration and the Principals of the district need the mentoring program to provide support to the initial educators that they can not provide.

Recruiting new teachers is a very time consuming process and time and attention is required to make good hiring choices. The administration invests the up front time to find high quality teachers, but is not able to provide these educators with much one-on-one attention throughout the school year. The mentoring program is designed to provide the missing supports and to nurture the initial educators and provide them with the advanced skills they need to educate the student of the Sun Prairie Area School District. The School Board is accountable to the taxpayers of the school community to provide high quality education in the most cost effective manner. With a successful induction program the initial educators grow professionally and provide quality instruction at a level consistent with the district's standards. By decreasing teacher turnover the upfront investment that the district makes for each initial educator can outweigh the costs of high turnover.

Definition of Terms

Initial Educator. An initial educator is a new teacher in Wisconsin who was certified as a teacher after September 1, 2005. This is a three to five year non-renewable license.

Professional Educator. A professional educator is a teacher who was licensed prior to September 1, 2005, or, who has completed the initial educator licensure stage. This is where most educators will spend the majority of their teaching career. This license is renewable every five years by completing a professional development plan (PDP).

Master Educator. A teacher who has completed at least one five year term as a professional educator and who has either passed the National Board Certification

in their content area, or who has completed Wisconsin's version of the National Board Certification. This is a ten year renewal license.

Professional Development Plan. The plan developed by teachers in all three stages of licensure to demonstrate growth in at least two Wisconsin Teacher Standards and is used to renew their license.

Professional Development Team. A three person team of educators, who have attended Department of Public Instruction (DPI) training, that review the PDPs of teachers seeking to renew their licensure. The PDP team for initial educators consists of one administrator, one peer teacher, and a representative from an institute of higher education (IHE). The PDP team for a professional educator is three peers. The PDP team for master educator is three master teachers.

Induction. Induction is the support and guidance provided to beginning teachers when they begin employment and is designed to orient them and socialize them to the workplace.

Mentor. A mentor is an experienced teacher who has received specialized training and who works with initial educators to provide them support during their first years in the classroom environment. The mentor job description is in Appendix A.

Limitations of the Study

Since this program is in its first year there is only one set of 30 new teachers and two mentors who can be surveyed to collect data on the mentor program. The district has retention data from prior years for three and six years, but the retention data from this group of initial educators will not be available for three years and six years into the future. The retention data that will be analyzed is the number of initial educators who returned their letter of intent for the 2006-2007 school year.

Methodology

A literature review will be completed to review the various types of mentor program models that are being used in school districts across the nation. The models will also be reviewed for strengths and limitations. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected and analyzed. A survey tool will be designed and distributed to all 30 initial educators hired for the 2005-2006 school year in the Sun Prairie Area School District to collect data about the impact the full release mentor model has had on the initial educators. Survey data will be collected from the mentors and will be evaluated. Preliminary retention data will be obtained from all 205-2006 initial educators. Suggestions will be solicited from mentors and initial educators for program enhancements.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Teaching is a challenging career for a novice teacher. Many times they are entering the least equipped classroom, with the toughest students, and the greatest number of subjects or course preparations. The education community needs to ensure that there are quality induction programs that will welcome our newest colleagues and prepare them for life in the classroom. The only experience most beginning teachers have is the short time that they spent in pre-service programs as a student teacher. This first classroom is the first time they are completely responsible for educating the children. According to Jones and Pauley (2003) these are exactly the reasons that there are national, state, and local beliefs that beginning teachers need a quality support system during their first years of teaching. New teachers enter their classrooms and are expected to teach the children just like the veteran teachers. According to Ingersoll (2002) this is the reason that one third of them leave the profession within the first three years and of those who leave the profession 43% cite inadequate support as the primary reason they have left teaching.

Mentors are an essential component to any teacher induction program. Some times the terms mentoring and induction are used interchangeably; however, they are not the same. Mentoring can be an essential component of a successful induction program, but a successful induction program is not built on mentoring alone. "Since the early 1980's, mentoring has received increased attention as part of the local, state, and national teacher reform agenda" (Breux and Wong, 2003, p.55). Many states are now requiring formal induction and/or mentoring programs. Based on an evaluation conducted in 1999 by the National Commission of Teaching and America's Future, the Education

Commission of the States (ECS) reported that more than 60% of the states not have legislation with regard to teacher mentoring programs and twenty two states require beginning teachers to participate in mentoring programs as conditions to licensure and/or employment (ECS, 1999). With the promulgation of PI-34 by the Wisconsin Legislature and under the direction of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction both mentoring and ongoing training are now legal requirements for initial educators. Many districts are struggling to meet the un-funded state mandate.

Types of Mentoring Programs

There are many different structures and types of mentoring programs that different school districts across the nation have implemented.

“Mentoring programs vary greatly from formal to informal, from the most comprehensive support of a full-time, highly trained mentor with a reasonable caseload who meets regularly with the new teachers, to an informal buddy system of support from an assigned fellow teacher who receives no release time, no compensation, and no training” (Strong, 2005, p.1).

Some of the more common models consist of the four following types: building buddies, pull-out mentors, full-time mentors, and retired teachers. The program a school district chooses may be based on many factors including district size, number new teachers hired annually, state mandates, and funding sources. Each district must work to develop a program that will meet its unique needs within its allotted resources. These four models will be defined in greater detail.

Building Buddies

Building buddies are typically teachers who provide information concerning the daily operations of the building that would include the building culture and norms. This can include such basics as the location of supplies, how to order copies, and where to eat lunch. The building culture is generally comprised of the un-written rules and norms that create the framework for the “how tos” with in the school environment. These are items that a new teacher would usually only find out when they had violated one of the un-written rules or norms. An expert in the field of mentoring (Villani, 2002, p. 11) describes the role of buddies in that “Mentors can tell them ‘the way things are done here’ in advance, or notice when there are misperceptions. Then, as buddies, they can help the new teacher sort through the misunderstandings.” These buddies play a very valuable role for the new teacher in their building(s) and that role should not be down played, however, new teachers have needs that are far greater than a typical buddy can provide.

Table 1 – Building Buddies

Component	Description	Pro	Con
Role of the Mentor	Provide basic building and district level information concerning daily operations.	Provide building based information and can acquaint mentee to the building culture and norms.	Very informal and does not include classroom practice.
Mentor Selection	Typically chosen and assigned by the	Usually similar in grade level or	Does not take into account the individual

	Principal.	subject matter.	needs of the mentee.
Mentor Training	Training provided to the mentor.	Little if any time or cost.	Very informal, typically no set materials to cover.
Mentor Activities	Types of interactions between mentor and mentee.	Spends time with mentee showing them the building level “how tos” including the culture and norms.	Very informal, typically no set materials to cover.
Time Allocation	Amount of time spent between the mentor and mentee.	Little if any time or cost.	Very informal, typically no set materials to cover may only occur in the beginning of the new teacher’s year.
Cost	What is the cost of the resources needed for the program?	Very inexpensive, typically no sub or training costs.	

Pull-out Mentors

The pull-out model is one where the classroom teacher takes on the additional responsibilities of mentoring a new teacher in the grade level, subject matter, and/or

building. In a way it is like an extra-curricular activity that the experienced teachers are advising, but instead of students they advise new teachers. This mentoring role can be one that is compensated or a volunteer activity. According to Boreen, Johnson, Niday, and Potts (2000) mentors should be experienced teachers and if possible should share the same content area or the same or similar grade level to be able to provide the most direct assistance, and have a classroom location within a close proximity of the new teacher. Some of the benefits of having this type of a classroom teacher as a mentor include accessibility on a regular basis between the mentor and the mentee. When these teachers are teaching the same curriculum they can provide useful instructional strategies that relate specifically to the subject matter being taught. The teachers approach events at the same time and can work together to prepare, for example parent teacher conferences or open houses. Also, the veteran teachers are often in the best possible positions of introducing the new teachers to others in their buildings and key resource personnel in the district.

On the flip side these experienced teachers are extremely busy with their own students, parents, and classroom activities. Often the teachers who would be chosen to be these mentors are also those teachers who are invited to participate in district and building committees, and work on curriculum. These teachers may have difficulty finding time to meet with their mentees. At the secondary level they may have different prep periods and at the elementary level their only common planning time may be a short lunch period. For many mentoring activities release time would need to be provided by substitutes to give the mentor and the mentee time to observe and model instructional practices.

Table 2 - Pull Out Mentors

Component	Description	Pro	Con
Role of the Mentor	Similar to that of an extracurricular advisor for the new teacher. Provides guidance and support for the mentee. Program may be formal.	Veteran teachers can introduce new teachers to others in building and key resources in district.	Experienced teachers are often busy with their own students, parent, and classroom activities.
Mentor Selection	Typically chosen and assigned by the Principal.	Usually similar in grade level or subject matter and classrooms may be in close proximity.	Does not take into account the individual needs of the mentee. Mentor may have difficulty finding time to meet.
Mentor Training	Training provided to the mentor.	There may be formal training provided, would include large numbers on an annual basis.	Training would either need to occur with subs provided for the mentors or during non-school time and may have added costs. The more mentors the

			<p>less consistency.</p> <p>May be hard to recruit the numbers needed on an annual basis for the new teachers.</p>
<p>Mentor Activities</p>	<p>Types of interactions between mentor and mentee.</p>	<p>Spends time with mentee showing them the building level “how tos”, curriculum based concepts, and instructional strategies. May include modeling and classroom observations.</p>	<p>Very challenging to find time together.</p> <p>May results in added sub costs to find common time for observations and modeling.</p>
<p>Time Allocation</p>	<p>Amount of time spent between the mentor and mentee.</p>	<p>Can vary with in the program model, may be anywhere from daily to weekly.</p>	<p>Very challenging to find time together.</p> <p>May result in added sub costs to find common time for observations and</p>

			modeling.
Cost	What is the cost of the resources needed for the program?	May not require use of monetary stipend. May be able to creatively schedule to minimize the costs of subs and training.	Can be moderately expensive, typically includes sub and training costs. May include additional compensation for the mentors.

Full Time Mentors

Some larger school district or state supported programs have been able to provide full-time mentors to beginning teachers. Sweeny (2002) indicates that such configurations are more common these days and can be seen in cities like Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Baltimore. In this model the mentors are released from all teaching responsibilities and work intensively with a group of new teachers typically ranging in size from twelve to fifteen mentees.

“Full-time mentors are able to devote themselves to new teachers, they don’t have the conflicting demands of a class of their own. They can be trained in many aspects of mentoring, and have the time to provide support on instructional and curriculum issues. Full-time mentors can accommodate the new teacher’s schedule more easily when they do observations and conferencing because they aren’t concerned about coverage of their own students” (Villani, 2002, p. 21).

The districts that use this model have found that this model can be extremely effective because it balances the use of time and focuses the needed attention in the classroom of the new teacher without disrupting another teacher's classroom. Districts can also use this model as a marketing tool when recruiting new teachers by showing the time and resource commitment for the new teachers. The full-time release model is a solution to the number of problems that can occur when a teacher is attempting to balance his/her role of classroom teacher and mentor at the same time.

In contrast there are some challenges that can be seen with this program model. Since full-time mentors are covering a caseload of approximately fifteen teachers they may find that the different new teachers they support are in different buildings across the school district. Many of the new teachers will teach in different subjects or grade levels. Depending on a district's capacity and number of mentors it can be very common for a caseload to include such drastic differences in new teacher's assignments such as kindergarten, middle school math, high school English and high school technology education. Also supporting teachers across multiple buildings will mean they may not be available spontaneously when a critical questions can arise needing some immediate support. One additional challenge is that with the mentors not being part of individual school communities they may not be the best person to help acclimate the new teacher into the individual school communities and teach them the building norms. Depending on how long the mentor has been mentoring there could be a question as to how current the mentor's classroom practice is if the mentor has been out of the classroom for many years. It is for this reason that many full-time programs are done on a year specific basis

with a requirement that the teacher return to the classroom for a minimum time before they can reapply to be a mentor.

One very successful full-time mentoring program is the Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (SCNTP). This program which began in 1988 was designed to assist and support new teachers in schools in Southern California. According to The New Teacher Center Website, as viewed and downloaded on March 3, 2006, this model includes components designed:

- To develop teacher capacity as defined in the California Standards for the Teaching Profession
- To direct support toward improving student achievement
- To use formative assessment practices to guide support
- To document professional growth over time
- To model and encourage ongoing self-assessment and reflection
- To foster collaboration and leadership among teachers

The program includes support to the new teachers by providing a new teacher advisor, mentor, who is a veteran teacher with exemplary teaching practice, who has been released full-time to support the new teacher. A professional portfolio is created that showcases the teacher's growth overtime to meet the district's goals and the teacher's individual learning plan. There are monthly workshops that focus on the California teaching standards and build support and collegiality among the new teachers. The model also includes release time for the new teachers so that they may observe veteran teachers and attend professional development opportunities. According to the New Teacher Center (2006),

“Research shows that with this type of intensive support, new teachers demonstrate higher levels of professional competence and greater success in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. In addition studies report increased job satisfaction and retention. After 14 years, fewer than five percent of NTP teachers have left the profession. This contrasts with a nationwide attrition rate of nearly fifty percent”
(http://www.newteachercenter.org/ti_scsvntp.php).

Table 3 - Full Time Mentors

Component	Description	Pro	Con
Role of the Mentor	Typically a formalized relationship between the new teacher and a master teacher that provides support in the areas of instructional strategies, classroom management, lesson planning, school and/or district resources, and, parent and community relations. Mentors typically have a caseload of 12-15 new teachers.	Master teachers can spend necessary time with new teachers providing support in a variety of areas.	Teacher may have background in a different grade level, subject matter, or student age level.

Mentor Selection	Typically chosen through a formal process and done through the district office.	Typically a rigorous process that hires those who are master teachers.	Teacher may have background in a different grade level, subject matter, or student age level.
Mentor Training	Training provided to the mentor.	Typically formal training initially provided and would also include on-going training.	If training is out-sourced may be costly.
Mentor Activities	Types of interactions between mentor and mentee.	Spends time with mentee showing them instructional strategies, classroom management, and would include modeling and classroom observations.	
Time Allocation	Amount of time spent between the mentor and mentee.	Typically minimum of weekly interaction. Mentor can balance	

		their time and provide additional time as needed. Mentor may model in the mentee's classroom, or provide coverage for the mentee to observe a grade level or subject matter peer.	
Cost	What is the cost of the resources needed for the program?	Resources specifically channeled into program. Reduce use of subs because mentor can provide classroom coverage.	Most expensive model since it is based on master teacher's salary and benefit costs.

Retired Teachers

Some districts across the nation are tapping into a very valuable resource that already exists in their communities. Villani (2002) tells us that inviting retired teachers back to mentor is being looked at more and more frequently as the number of teachers retiring can often exceed the number of experienced teachers in a particular grade level or subject. In this model the teachers that are mentors do not need to make the choice to give up their classroom to mentor full time, they have already chosen to retire from the

classroom, but it allows the district to continue to benefit from their teaching expertise. Retired teacher can offer the new teachers connections to the many teachers that they know from having worked in the district for many years. However, one must be careful that there are criteria to choose mentors carefully and years spent in the district is not the sole criteria used to make these choices. In the late 1980s New York City had a program that used retired teaches as mentors for some of the new teachers to the city. Sachs and Wilcox (1988) found that mentored beginning teachers were more satisfied with the support they received when compared to the new teachers who did not receive the support of a mentor. Also, the majority of retired teachers found that by continuing to stay connected to the teaching profession by mentoring they were better able to transition into retirement. Peter Hart Research was commissioned by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in 1997 to conducted national research of retired AFT members. The data from the poll indicated that more than a third of retirees, particularly women under 65, are interested in volunteering in mentoring programs for students or struggling teachers (American Federation of Teachers). The use of retired teachers should be more cost effective then using a non-retired teacher because the district would not be responsible for contributing retirement contributions and/or providing insurance benefits to an already retired teacher.

Table 4 – Retired Teachers

Component	Description	Pro	Con
Role of the Mentor	Typically a formalized relationship between the	Veteran teachers can provide	Retired teacher may have background in

	new teacher and a veteran teacher that provides support in the areas of instructional strategies, classroom management, lesson planning, school and/or district resources, and, parent and community relations	support on a flexible time needed basis.	a different grade level, subject matter, or student age level.
Mentor Selection	Typically chosen through a formal process and done through the district office. May provide mentoring to one or more new teachers.	May be similar in grade level or subject matter. Retired teacher has many years for experience to draw on. Does not disrupt mentor's classroom since they are retired.	Simply because the retired teacher has many years of experience they may not be a "master teacher".
Mentor Training	Training provided to the mentor.	There may be formal training provided and	May not have a retired teacher in similar grade,

		numbers available would be impacted by number of retired teachers.	subject matter, or student level.
Mentor Activities	Types of interactions between mentor and mentee.	Spends time with mentee showing them instructional strategies, classroom management, and would include modeling and classroom observations.	
Time Allocation	Amount of time spent between the mentor and mentee.	Can vary with in the program model, may be anywhere from daily to weekly.	Retired teacher may want to limit time available since not a full time job.
Cost	What is the cost of the resources needed for the program?	Typically a bargained hourly or stipend rate. If	Can be moderately expensive depending on

		done as a full time positions would save on fringe benefit costs (WRS and insurance).	compensation rate for the mentors.
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Implications of Mentoring Programs

As the various models are compared the Sun Prairie Area School District has tried three of the four models. The first documented program was in 1999 and building buddies were used, the next several years pull out mentors were used, and now beginning with the 2005-2006 school year full-time mentors are being used. In the fall of 2003 the school district created a committee through the negotiations process to review the implications of PI-34 on the school district. This committee included members of administration, teachers, and the school board. The committee first reviewed the various types of induction and mentoring programs that are being used around the country and the state. Also, at this time Sun Prairie was involved in the Dane County New Teacher Project Consortium that was bringing the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project model to Wisconsin. The belief and commitment to a strong induction and mentoring program has lead the Sun Prairie Area School District to this current full-time release model. In the spring of 2005 two full-time mentors were hired to assist thirty initial educators beginning their teaching career in the fall of 2005. These mentors will work with the initial educators for a period of three years. The strategic plan includes hiring additional

mentors in 2006 and 2007 so that at the three year point the district will employ six full-time mentors supporting a total of ninety initial educators. While the current model may be the most expensive, it is believed by the district that this model is also the most effective.

It has been shown in numerous studies that induction programs that include mentoring will increase the retention rate of new teachers. According to Wilkinson (Summer 1994) induction has a huge impact on retention as can be seen in the following statistics:

33% of qualified new teachers leave the profession within the first three years.

50% of qualified new teachers leave the profession within the first seven years.

95% of beginning teachers who experience support during their initial years remain in teaching after three years.

80% of the supported teachers remain in teaching after five years.

Mentoring and induction programs provide supports to new teachers that encourage teachers to stay in the teaching profession. A strong mentoring program will provide emotional support to the new teacher and help them overcome the emotional feeling of isolation. Teaching has long been an occupation of isolation, a teacher goes into his/her classroom and shuts the door, and teaches all day in isolation of his/her colleagues. Teaching is changing to a more collaborative environment and providing emotional support to the initial educator is essential to his/her success. According to Odell and Ferraro (1992) emotional support has ranked the highest among new teachers, other factors ranked from most to least important include “support in instructional strategies,

obtaining resources, support in classroom management strategies, working with parents, managing the school day, and functioning within the school district” (page 201).

The goal of teacher training programs from pre-service through in district professional development is to improve the practice of the teacher and in a sense the effectiveness of the teacher. When a new, better method for delivering curriculum is determined teachers will receive the training on how to teach using this new method. When you have a new teacher you need an induction program that will focus on what the teacher needs to know to be effective in the classroom. In Wisconsin the state Department of Public Instruction has defined ten Wisconsin Teaching Standards. These standards focus on a teacher’s ability to: know the subjects they are teaching, know how children grow, understand that children learn differently, know how to teach, know how to manage a classroom, know how to communicate well, can plan different kinds of lessons, know how to test for student progress, are able to evaluate themselves, and are connected with other teachers and the community. According to Fletcher and Barrett (2003) induction programs that teach beginning teachers about school context and students, and to combine this knowledge with pedagogy and subject matter content will increase a new teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom.

Mentoring Programs and Teacher Retention

It has been hypothesized that a quality induction and mentoring program will increase teacher retention. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) completed a comprehensive review of 150 empirical studies of induction and mentoring programs and included ten of these studies in their review for the Education Commission of the States (ECS) on the impact of mentoring on teacher retention.

“While the impact of induction and mentoring differed significantly among the 10 studies reviewed, collectively the studies do provide empirical support for the claim that assistance for new teachers and, in particular, mentoring programs have a positive impact on teachers and their retention” (Ingersoll and Kralik, 2004, p. 1).

Induction can be viewed as a bridge that exists between the teacher pre-service student teaching experience and being a teacher of students in a school district. One challenge with research that has been done on mentoring and induction is that it is hard to compare one study to another. There are many other factors that can contribute to a mentoring program, for example the type of mentoring program offered, the frequency of the contact between the mentor and the new teacher, the amount of contact time that is required between the mentor and the new teachers, the number of new teachers a mentor serves, and the level of training that the mentor receives prior to becoming a mentor. The ten programs that Ingersoll and Kralik included in their study were; The California Mentor teacher Induction Project, New York City Retired-Teachers-as-Mentors Program, Toronto Teacher Peer Support Program, Mentoring Program in an Unspecified District, Montana Beginning Teacher Support Program, Texas Study of New Teacher Retention, Analysis of the 1993 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Survey, Analysis of the 1990-91 School and Staffing Survey, Analyses of the 1999-2000 School and Staffing Survey, and The Texas Beginning Educator Support System. Overall the ten studies that were reviewed by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) provided results that mentoring programs have a positive relationship on new teachers and their retention in teaching.

Chapter III: Methodology

For this study mentoring program models for new teachers were analyzed, compared, and contrasted. The Sun Prairie Area School District has experience with building buddies, pull-out mentors, and full-time release mentors. The full-time mentor release model was implemented beginning with the 2005-2006 school year. This study will look at the feedback obtained from the full time mentors, the initial educators being serviced by these mentors, and the mentor program coordinator to obtain feedback on the successes and the challenges of the newly implemented program. Participants will also be asked to provide suggestions for improvement in future school years.

Subject Selection and Description

This study was conducted using an objective-based evaluation model that is focused on the goals and objectives of the mentoring program. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed. The thirty (30) initial educators for the 2005-2006 school year in the Sun Prairie Area School District were surveyed. The two full-time release mentors were be surveyed.

This study will also analyze retention data from the 2005-2006 school year. While the longitudinal retention data will not be known for three and six years respectively it will be important to look at the initial trends. The retention data is only based on the educators staying in the Sun Prairie Area School District, and does not include those educators who stayed in education but changed districts. The data also does not distinguish between reasons that educators left the Sun Prairie Area School District.

Instrumentation

A survey tool was designed and given to twenty eight initial educators. The tool was designed to elicit feedback on the effectiveness of the program and also to ask for suggestions for changes in future years. A similar survey tool was designed and given to each of the full time mentors. The tool was designed to elicit feedback on the effectiveness of the program and also to ask for suggestions for changes in future years.

Data Collection Procedures

A 24 question survey was administered to the initial educators through an on-line electronic survey. A 24 question survey was administered to the full time mentors through an on-line electronic survey.

The retention data was simply collected by looking at the number of initial educators that returned their contract acceptance memo indicating they would be returning to the district for the 2006-2007 school year.

Data Analysis

A number of statistical analyses were used in this study to analyze the percentages of respondents that agreed or disagreed with the survey statements concerning the induction and mentoring program. The qualitative data obtained from the open ended survey questions was summarized into general themes. The data obtained from the mentors was compared directly to the data obtained from the initial educators to determine the correlation between the perceptions of the program by the initial educators compared to the perception of the program obtained from the mentors.

Limitations

One of the significant limitations of this study was the number of program participants. There were only twenty eight initial educators to survey and only two mentors to survey. The true impact on retention can not be analyzed for several years or compared to improved future retention three and six years into the future. It is recommended that the surveys tools be given annually to each new group of initial educators and mentors and compared not only annual, but to prior year's analysis. This will also be a way to note if any changes over time in the program have impacted the survey results.

There are also limitations in the retention data analysis. The reasons a teacher left the school district was not included in the analysis. Some teachers may not have left education, but simply changed districts. Others may have left to stay home with families and intend to return to education in the future.

Chapter IV: Results

The Sun Prairie Area School District is a rapidly growing K-12 district located in south central Wisconsin. With significant growth projected over the next twenty-years it is critical that new hires become integrated into the school setting as rapidly as possible. To facilitate this acclimation the district has explored many components of successful induction and mentoring programs that are being used in the state of Wisconsin and around the country. In the past the district has used building buddies and pull-out mentors but was not completely satisfied that the new educators were being supported to the level that the district wanted. The Sun Prairie Area School District implemented a full-time release mentor model program beginning with the 2005-06 school year as a significant component of the new teacher induction program.

The purpose of this study was to collect data from the mentors and the initial educators that are supported by the mentors to determine if the mentors and the initial educators found the program to be beneficial. Each mentor was assigned a caseload of fifteen new initial educators and they supported the educator throughout the school year both in one-on-one situations and during ongoing support seminars. The mentors and the initial educators were sent an e-mail inviting them to participate in an electronic survey. The survey consisted of twenty two statements that they rated on a four pronged scale from strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or the statement was not applicable and two open ended questions. Twenty six of the twenty eight initial educators responded for response rate of ninety three (93%) percent. Both of the mentors responded for a one hundred (100%) percent response rate.

Item Analysis

Question One: The mentor helps the initial educator understand the norms of the school. The mentors strongly agreed at 100% (2) that they are helping the initial educators understand the school norms, while 31% (8) of the initial educators strongly agreed and 69% (18) agreed with the same statement.

Question Two: The mentor helps the initial educator think reflectively regarding his/her teaching. The initial educators had 64% (16) strongly agree and 36% (9) agree, while the mentors had 50% (1) strongly agree and 50% (1) agree with the statement.

Question Three: The mentor helps the initial educator focus on teaching strategies related to content. The initial educators had 58% (14) strongly agree and 42% (10) agree, while the mentors had 50% (1) strongly agree and 50% (1) agree with the statement.

Question Four: The mentor helps the initial educators improve his/her instructional strategies. The initial educators had 46% (11) strongly agree and 54% (13) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Five: The mentor helps the initial educator with classroom management strategies. The initial educators had 50% (12) strongly agree and 50% (12) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Six: The mentor helps the initial educator use student assessment data and/or student work to guide instruction. The initial educators had 26% (6) strongly agree, 57% (13) agree and 17% (4) disagree, while the mentors had 100% (2) agree with the statement.

Question Seven: The mentor encourages the initial educators to create positive classroom communities. The initial educators had 67% (16) strongly agree and 33% (8) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Eight: The mentor observed the initial educator at least once a month. The initial educators had 50% (12) strongly agree, 38% (9) agree, and 12% (3) disagree, while the mentors had 50% (1) agree and 50% (1) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Nine: The mentor models effective instructional strategies in the initial educator's classroom. The initial educators had 48% (10) strongly agree, 48% (10) agree, and 4% (1) disagree, while the mentors had 50% (1) strongly agree and 50% (1) disagree with the statement.

Question Ten: The mentor assists the initial educator with developing lesson plans and/or long term planning. The initial educators had 24% (6) strongly agree, 56% (14) agree, 16% (4) disagree, and 4% (1) strongly disagree, while the mentors had 100% (2) agree with the statement.

Question Eleven: The mentor helps the initial educator focus on student centered instruction. The initial educators had 44% (11) strongly agree and 56% (14) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Twelve: The mentor helps the initial educators work with students of diverse linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The initial educators had 27% (6) strongly agree, 68% (15) agree, and 5% (1) disagree, while the mentors had 50% (1) agree and 50% (1) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Thirteen: The mentor helps the initial educator differentiate his/her instruction. The initial educators had 35% (8) strongly agree and 65% (15) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) agree with the statement.

Question Fourteen: The mentor helps the initial educator by providing release time to observe other teachers. The initial educators had 23% (5) strongly agree, 45% (10) agree, and 32% (7) disagree, while the mentors had 50% (1) agree and 50% (1) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Fifteen: The mentor helps the initial educator with problem solving related to classroom, building, and community issues. The initial educators had 69% (18) strongly agree and 31% (8) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Sixteen: The mentor helps the initial educator establish connections with other teachers. The initial educators had 20% (5) strongly agree, 72% (18) agree, and 8% (2) disagree, while the mentors had 100% (2) agree with the statement.

Question Seventeen: The mentor encourages the initial educators to maintain parent communications. The initial educators had 32% (8) strongly agree and 68% (17) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Eighteen: The mentor communicates with the initial educators in a non-threatening manner. The initial educators had 81% (21) strongly agree and 19% (5) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Nineteen: The mentor maintains the initial educator's confidentiality. The initial educators had 77% (20) strongly agree and 23% (6) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Twenty: The mentor offers the initial educators positive emotional support. The initial educators had 85% (22) strongly agree and 15% (4) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Twenty One: The mentor and the initial educator felt that time spent working together is valuable. The initial educators had 69% (18) strongly agree and 31% (8) agree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

Question Twenty Two: The mentor and the initial educator felt the ongoing professional development seminars are valuable. The initial educators had 38% (10) strongly agree, 50% (13) agree, 8% (2) strongly disagree, and 4% (1) disagree, while the mentors had 100% (2) strongly agree with the statement.

The mentors described the strengths of the program as:

- having an opportunity to focus instruction on student centered learning goals
- time to address needs and adjust time as the need arises
- wonderful team environment between the two mentors
- excellent training that was provided by the Dane County New Teacher Project
- excellent administrators to work with.

The initial educators described the strengths of the program as;

- having someone there to guide you and answer questions
- help planning and implementing ideas
- mentor is readily available and will try to resolve problems
- the mentor links the administration and the new teacher

- the mentor can focus on the problem areas while the teacher can focus on the students
- having a school employee to consult with in confidence
- another adult to converse with about frustrations, concerns, and questions
- someone to talk to who is not from the teacher's school
- trust
- extra help
- getting used to all the stuff they can't teach in college
- guide through completing school paperwork
- guide through PI-34 and PDP process
- mental relief
- advice from the trenches
- another teacher to bounce ideas off of
- fresh perspective
- weekly meeting are like therapy
- flexibility of the program
- the positive mentors
- detailed mentor interaction log
- observations of my classroom
- mentor as an advocate and a listener
- collaboration time
- modeling

The mentors made the following suggestions for the induction and mentoring program:

- keep the case load at 15 or less
- find ways to spend more time in new teacher's classrooms

The initial educators made the following suggestions for the induction and mentoring program:

- involve all new employees in the ongoing professional development workshops
- more interaction for elective teachers with other in the same subject areas
- once a month reflection
- more focus on paperwork that is required
- more time for long term planning and lesson planning
- find times to meet outside of the school day so that it did not interfere with prep time
- use different professional opportunities for pupil services personnel
- more time for collaboration with other new teachers
- subject specific mentors
- tour of the school before school began

Table 5 – Survey Results

Questions	Initial Educators				Mentors			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Understand school norms	31%	69%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Think reflectively	64%	36%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Focus on content teaching strategies	58%	42%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Improve instructional skills	46%	54%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Classroom management	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Use student assessment	26%	57%	17%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Create positive classroom community	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Observed teaching	50%	38%	12%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Models instructional strategies	48%	48%	4%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%
Assists with lesson plans and planning	24%	56%	16%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Focus on student centered instruction	44%	56%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Work students of diverse backgrounds	27%	68%	5%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Differentiate instruction	35%	65%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Provides release time	23%	45%	32%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Helps problem solve	69%	31%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Helps connect with other teachers	20%	72%	8%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Maintains parent communications	32%	68%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Communicates in a non-threatening manner	81%	19%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Maintains confidentiality	77%	23%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Offers positive emotional support	85%	15%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Time spent together is valuable	69%	31%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Ongoing professional development is valuable	38%	50%	8%	4%	100%	0%	0%	0%

The retention statistics that are available at this time are the number of the initial educators that returned their contract acceptance letters indicating they will be returning

for the next school year. At this time twenty six of the thirty initial educators report that they intend to return to the Sun Prairie Area School District for the 2006-2007 school year. This is an initial retention rate of 87%.

Overall the survey data shows that the initial educators appreciated the support they received through the initial educator program. In fifteen of the questions all of the initial educators who rated the questions either strongly agreed or agreed that the mentors supported them for that specific characteristic. There were three areas that the response rate of the educators to strongly agree was above 75%; the mentor maintains confidentiality at 77% (20), the mentor communicates in a non-threatening manner at 81% (21), and that the mentor offers positive emotional support at 85% (22). The comment section included many positives about the value and strengths of the program. Overall the mentors either strongly agreed or agreed with every question on the full-time mentoring and induction program with the exception of one question. The mentor's results demonstrated that they felt the program was meeting the program goals.

Chapter V: Discussion

After completion of the first year of the full-time mentoring model the district wants to evaluate the effectiveness of the new full time release mentor program and make any suggestions for improvement as it moves through the next several years. The main purpose of this study was to determine if the program is meeting its goals. The study was also done to attempt to justify the cost of the program to the various stakeholder groups. It is important to determine if the initial educators feel they are benefiting from the program and retention rates of the initial educators are increasing over time. It is also a belief that the mentors will gain valuable experiences in the program and when they return to their classroom, after the three years of being a mentor, they will be a better practitioner. The study will also look to what changes and modification can be made over the next five years as the program grows.

The goals of the Sun Prairie Area School District New Teacher Mentor Program have four separate components. The first component is to build a collaborative environment in which teachers explore best practices. As we analyze the results we can see that the initial educators and the mentors reported that the program allowed time for classroom observation by the mentor and allowed the initial educator time to observe in others teacher's classrooms. In some instances the mentor even taught in the initial educator's classroom allowing the opportunity for the mentor to model best classroom practices for the new teachers. The mentors and the initial educators reported they agreed that the program allowed time for collaboration. The second component is to provide a supportive, confidential environment in which teachers work together to solve problems. The initial educators reported that the mentors did maintain their confidentiality and were

able to communicate in a non-threatening manner. The mentors also offered positive emotional support to the initial educators and several initial educators commented that the strengths of the program are having someone there to guide and support them whom they can trust. The mentor was also referred to as an advocate and a listener demonstrating the positive environment that provided time for the mentor and the initial educator to work together. The third component is to create a community of life-long, reflecting learners who continually strive to improve student achievement. All of the initial educators reported that the mentors helped them think reflectively regarding their teaching. One of the ways that this was accomplished was through the use of a weekly reflection log that the mentors and the initial educators used in their meetings. Reflection is an important component because it allows the initial educator to process what works well and what changes they want to implement. This process will also be important as they begin to draft their professional development plans which require reflection on the ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards. The ongoing professional development support seminars provided the initial educators with continuing education and learning opportunities. The fourth and last goal of the program is to help the initial educators align their teaching practice to the ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards. The initial educators completed a self assessment rubric on each of the ten teaching standards and used this data to work with their mentor in the areas that need the most growth. The mentors will be working with their initial educators in the months of June through September of 2006 to draft their professional development plans based on these standards. By the end of year three it is the district's hope that many of the initial

educators will be advanced enough to have their plan verified and can advance to become a professional educator.

The individual question that yielded the greatest difference in the opinions of the mentors and the initial educator is the questions asking the initial educators and mentors about release time. The mentors either agreed or disagreed with the statement, but 32% or 7 of the initial educators disagreed with the statement. The mentors did remind the initial educators at the monthly seminar that they had this option. This should become a program requirement for the next year. Often teachers are used to being in isolation in the classroom and we need to encourage teachers to take advantage of the opportunity to watch others teach and promote collegiality.

The question that asked the initial educators if the mentor assisted them with lesson plans and/or long term planning had a notable difference in the results between the mentors and the initial educators. Both of the mentors agreed that they did assist the initial educators with lesson plans and/or long term planning, but there were four initial educators who disagreed and one who strongly disagreed. In the comment section it was noted that it was a challenge to work on lesson plans when the mentor's background and the initial educator's classroom assignment did not align. This is one of the challenges of a full-time mentor program because you can not match the mentor's and the initial educator's content areas. One suggestion to improve this challenge is to have a stronger buddy system, especially at the secondary level, for the initial educators where they have a building connection to a teacher in their content area.

Another area that showed a notable difference was the question that asked if the mentor helped the initial educators use student assessment data and/or student work to

guide instruction. The mentors both agreed with the statement, but there were four initial educators who disagreed. The concept of using student data to help direct instruction is a component that does not get a significant focus during the first year. The results of the state assessment are not available until May and by that time the majority of the school year has been completed. This concept will need to be addressed further during year two of the program.

There were three of the twenty six initial educators who completed the survey that did not find value in the ongoing professional development seminars. The mentors both strongly agreed with the value of the professional development seminars. In analyzing the open ended questions the reason for this appears to focus on the pupil services personnel not finding the topics to be as relevant to their needs as the initial educators who are teaching in the classroom.

One of the program components was time for the mentors to observe the initial educators teaching. The established frequency was at least one time per month. The mentors either strongly agreed or agreed that they provided this direction observation monthly, but there were three initial educators who did not agree with this statement. With fifteen initial educators to support it was determined that this was a realistic expectation, but in reality there are some months because of non-students days that this expectation may not be realistic.

Limitations

This program evaluation did contain limitations in the limited number of individuals that participated in the program. There were only two mentors and twenty eight initial educators who were eligible to participate in the study. As the district moves

into year two of the program it will again survey the next set of initial educators and the next set of mentors.

The data on retention statistics will not be available for three and six years respectively. At the end of the 2005-2006 school year we know that twenty six of the thirty initial educators returned their ongoing contract acceptance letters for a retention rate of eighty seven percent. Of the four who are not returning one is leaving education all together and three will be going to different school districts.

Conclusions

All of the participants in the 2005-2006 full-time release mentoring and induction program in the Sun Prairie Area School District reported a great degree of satisfaction with the program. There was correlation between the findings reported by mentors and the initial educators. There were many strengths of the current program noted. The program did meet the four goals; building a collaborative environment in which teachers explore best practices, providing a supportive, confidential environment in which teachers work together to solve problems, creating a community of life-long, reflecting learners who continually strive to improve student achievement, and helping the initial educators align their teaching practice to the ten Wisconsin Teaching Standards. The results of this study did conform to the results established in other studies that demonstrated the overall satisfaction that teachers have when they feel that they are being supported in their classroom environment. Several initial educators commented that peers they have in other districts are envious of the induction program that is in Sun Prairie. The initial retention results show an 87% retention rate after the first year.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the district continue the current full-time release mentor and induction program. The initial educators should continue to get the support at the current case load of 15 +/- 2 initial educators to each mentor. The retention data should be tracked after three and six years to see if this change in the program delivery model to a full-time mentor has improved new teacher retention. The program should include modifications for next school year that will allow for more time for informal networking opportunities for the initial educators. The district should also look at creating differences in the ongoing professional development seminars for pupil services personnel such as guidance counselors and school psychologists. Program participants should be given the opportunity annually to rate the effectiveness of the program and provided the opportunity for input into suggestions for changes in future years.

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Appendix A: Teacher Mentor Job Description

SUN PRAIRIE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUN PRAIRIE, WISCONSIN 53590

Job Description

JOB TITLE: TEACHER MENTOR

DEPARTMENT:	Instructional Services	
LOCATION:	District Wide	
REPORTS TO:	Assistant District Administrator of Instructional Programs	
PREPARED BY:	Director of Human Resources	DATE: April 1, 2004
APPROVED BY:	Sun Prairie School Board	DATE: October 11, 2004

SUMMARY

Forms a partnership with initial educators assisting them in curriculum development, classroom management, instructional strategies, assessment and all aspects of their professional development. Provides on-going support, advice, and counseling to the initial educator as an experienced member of the teaching profession. It is recognized that the mentor teacher is not to perform any evaluative tasks in relation to the initial educator.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES include the following. *Other duties may be assigned.*

- A. Acts as a resource for the initial educator which includes observing, conferring, providing advice, and assisting in the design and implementation of the Professional Development Plan; and is a liaison between the initial educator and community.
- B. Observes the initial educator's teaching methods in the classroom and holds pre- and post-observation conferences providing information regarding classroom performance.
- C. Models instructional practices in initial educator's classroom and allows opportunities for discussion.
- D. Attends on-going district supported mentor training.
- E. Assists in planning and facilitation of the on-going support seminars for initial educators.
- F. Respects the confidentiality of the initial educator.
- G. Provides support to initial educators in the development of their Professional Development Plans.
- H. Participates as a member of the Professional Development Plan review team for initial educators who are not assigned to their caseload.

- I. Works cooperatively with initial educators, staff members, administrators, higher education, and the community.
- J. Continues professional growth.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to eligible individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

EDUCATION and/or EXPERIENCE:

Minimum of a bachelor's degree in education and seven (7) years of classroom experience, or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Must have been an active teacher bargaining unit member in the last two years. A mentor certificate or training is preferred.

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

Ability to communicate with adult learners. Ability to develop a trusting, respectful, and confidential relationship with initial educators. Ability to read, analyze, and interpret general business periodicals, professional journals, technical procedures, or governmental regulations. Ability to write reports, business correspondence, and procedure manuals. Ability to present information effectively and respond to questions from groups of students, peers, administrators, parents, and the general public.

MATHEMATICAL SKILLS

Ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, and decimals. Ability to work with mathematical concepts such as probability and statistical inference. Ability to apply concepts such as fractions, percentages, ratios, and proportions to practical situations.

ANALYTICAL AND REASONING ABILITY

Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions. Ability to interpret an extensive variety of instructions furnished in written, verbal, schedule, mathematical or diagram form and deal with several abstract and concrete variables.

OTHER SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Ability to apply knowledge of current research and theory to instructional program; ability to plan and implement lessons based on building and district goals and the needs and abilities of students to whom assigned. Ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with students, peers, parents, administrators, and community. Ability to communicate clearly and concisely. Ability to use technology to accomplish job responsibilities that may include basic knowledge of e-mail, word processing, and spreadsheet software.

TEMPERAMENTS

Ability to direct others, collaborate with other professionals, have a flexible schedule, and influence people in their opinions, attitudes, and judgments.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to use hands and fingers, to handle, or feel; reach with hands and arms; and talk and hear. The employee frequently is required to stand and walk. The employee is occasionally required to sit and climb or balance. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 50 pounds. The employee is directly responsible for safety, well-being, or work output of other people. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and ability to adjust focus. The position requires the individual to meet multiple demands from several people and interact with the public and other staff.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is occasionally exposed to outside weather conditions. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate to loud. Must be able to travel to multiple buildings.

CERTIFICATES, LICENSES

Must possess and maintain or be eligible to hold a current Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction teaching, counseling, or administrative license. Valid Driver's License.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Shall complete a physical examination as required by Wisconsin Statute 118.25.

Appendix B: Wisconsin Ten Teacher Standards

Teachers know the subjects they are teaching

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines she or he teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for pupils.

Teachers know how children grow

The teacher understands how children with broad ranges of ability learn and provides instruction that supports their intellectual, social, and personal development.

Teachers understand that children learn differently

The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities.

Teachers know how to teach

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies, including the use of technology, to encourage children's development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

Teachers know how to manage a classroom

The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Teachers communicate well

The teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Teachers are able to plan different kinds of lessons

The teacher organizes and plans systematic instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, pupils, the community and curriculum goals.

Teachers know how to test for students progress

The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the pupil.

Teachers are able to evaluate themselves

The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on pupils, parents, professionals in the learning community and others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community

The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support pupil learning and well-being and acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.

From <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/stnad10.html>

Appendix C: Initial Educator Survey

Initial Educator Survey

As you get ready to end your first year in the Sun Prairie Area School District we ask for your feedback through this survey. The results will be analyzed as we begin to plan the second year of our full-time mentor and induction program. Your responses will be confidential and not linked to any individual. Thank you for completing our survey.

Please use the following scale to respond to the statements 1-22.

- 1 Strongly Agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Disagree
- 4 Strongly Disagree
- 0 Not Applicable

1. My mentor helps me understand the norms of my school.
2. My mentor helps me think reflectively regarding my teaching.
3. My mentor and I focus on teaching strategies as they relate to content.
4. My mentor helps me improve my instructional skills and teaching strategies.
5. My mentor helps me with classroom management strategies.
6. My mentor helps me use student assessment data and/or student work to guide instruction.
7. My mentor encourages me to create positive classroom communities.
8. My mentor observes my teaching (at least once a month).
9. My mentor models effective instructional strategies in my classroom.
10. My mentor assists me with developing lesson plans and/or long-term planning.
11. My mentor helps me focus on instruction that is student-centered.
12. My mentor helps me work with students of diverse linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
13. My mentor helps me differentiate my instruction.
14. My mentor has offered me release time to observe other teachers.
15. My mentor helps me with problem solving related to classroom, building and community issues.
16. My mentor helps me establish connections with other teachers.
17. My mentor encourages me to maintain parent communication.
18. My mentor communicates with me in a non-threatening manner.
19. My mentor maintains my confidentiality.
20. My mentor offers me positive emotional support.
21. Time spent working with my mentor is valuable.
22. The ongoing professional development seminars are valuable.
23. Please describe the current strengths of the induction and mentor program.
24. How could the induction and mentor program better meet your needs?

Appendix D: Mentor Survey

Mentor Survey

As you get ready to end your first year as a full-time mentor in the Sun Prairie Area School District we ask for your feedback through this survey. The results will be analyzed as we begin to plan the second year of our full-time mentor and induction program. Your responses will be confidential and not linked to any individual. Thank you for completing our survey.

Please use the following scale to respond to the statements 1-22.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Strongly Agree |
| 2 | Agree |
| 3 | Disagree |
| 4 | Strongly Disagree |
| 0 | Not Applicable |
-
1. As a mentor I help my initial educators understand the norms of the schools
 2. As a mentor I help my initial educators think reflectively regarding his/her teaching.
 3. As a mentor I help my initial educators focus on teaching strategies as they relate to content.
 4. As a mentor I help my initial educators improve his/her instructional skills and teaching strategies.
 5. As a mentor I help my initial educators with classroom management strategies.
 6. As a mentor I help my initial educators use student assessment data and/or student work to guide instruction.
 7. As a mentor I encourage my initial educators to create positive classroom communities.
 8. As a mentor I observe my initial educators teaching (at least once a month).
 9. As a mentor I model effective instructional strategies in my initial educator's classroom.
 10. As a mentor I assist my initial educators with developing lesson plans and/or long-term planning.
 11. As a mentor I help my initial educators focus on instruction that is student-centered.
 12. As a mentor I work with students of diverse linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
 13. As a mentor I help my initial educators differentiate his/her instruction.
 14. As a mentor I help my initial educators by offering release time to observe other teachers.
 15. As a mentor I help my initial educators with problem solving related to classroom, building and community issues.
 16. As a mentor I help my initial educators establish connections with other teachers.
 17. As a mentor I encourage my initial educators to maintain parent communication.
 18. As a mentor I communicate with my initial educators in a non-threatening manner.
 19. As a mentor I maintain my initial educator's confidentiality.
 20. As a mentor I offer my initial educators positive emotional support.
 21. Time spent working with my initial educators is valuable.
 22. The ongoing professional development seminars are valuable.

23. Please describe the current strengths of the induction and mentor program.
24. How could the induction and mentor program better meet your needs?